

E

457

.8

.N58

NICCOLLS

Lincoln

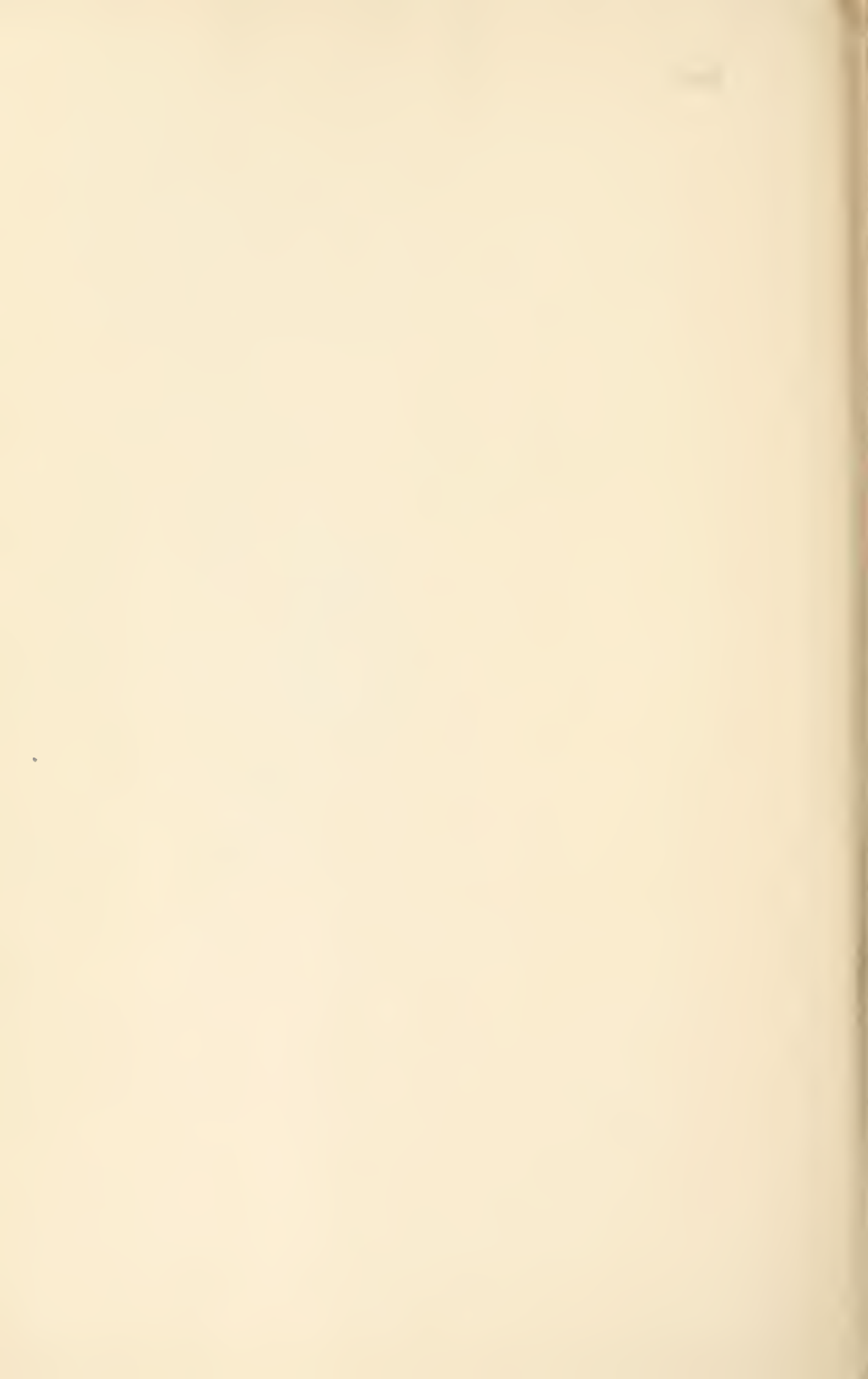




Class E457

Book 18

N56



IN MEMORIAM.

A

DISCOURSE

424
746

ON THE ASSASSINATION OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

President of the United States,

DELIVERED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, of St. Louis, April 23, 1865,

BY

REV. SAMUEL J. NICCOLLS.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

ST. LOUIS:
SHERMAN SPENCER, PRINTER. NO. 28 MARKET STREET.
1865.



IN MEMORIAM.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE ASSASSINATION OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

President of the United States,

DELIVERED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, of St. Louis, April 23d, 1865,

BY

REV. SAMUEL J. NICCOLLS.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

ST. LOUIS:

SHERMAN SPENCER, PRINTER. NO. 28 MARKET STREET.
1865.

E457
8
.N58

ALPHABETICALLY

THE
LIBRARY

OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BERKELEY, CALIF.

1954

51

DISCOURSE.

And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.—JUDGES XIX: 30.

THE narrative from which this passage is taken, is one of those fearful stories of crime and just retribution which the Spirit of God has recorded in His Word—for man's warning and instruction. A traveling Israelite passing through the land of Benjamin, was grossly insulted by some citizens of Gibeah, and his wife made the victim of a beastly outrage. The man, in accordance with an eastern custom, divided her dead body, and sent a part to each tribe in Israel, to tell, as no tongue could tell it, the story of his wrong. This foul outrage and murder had no parallel in Jewish history, and the report of it sent a thrill of horror through the hearts of the people, and awoke universal indignation. Gathering themselves together as one man, they demanded of the tribe of Benjamin the persons of the murderers, that they might put them to death, and thus purge Israel of this wickedness. But Benjamin refused, and so defending and sympathizing with the murderers, became implicated in their guilt. Thus this crime, though actually committed by a few, became one of national interest, and was followed by the most momentous consequences.

The passage recording its dreadful character might now, with a few verbal alterations, be transcribed in American history. Lately there has come to us the report of a deed so dark and damning in its character, that one might well be excused for thinking it too horrible to be true. It fell upon us in the midst of our joy, like a clap of thunder from a serene and sunlit sky. We were as one staggered by a sudden blow, and went to our homes that woeful day, struck dumb with horror and amazement. And well might it be so, for when Abraham Lincoln fell bleeding from that vile

murderer's weapon, a deed was committed, which for infamy and atrocity, stands without a parallel in our history. Not in the records of modern times, but in the bloody annals of barbarous days, when poison and the assassin's knife were the favorite instruments of tyrants and traitors, must we look to find a crime which does not seem like a virtue, when compared with this unnatural murder. We are humiliated when we hear the dreadful story repeated; for mingled with sorrow for the dead, and indignation against the perpetrators of the act, there is a sense of shame oppressing every true heart, that such a deed should stain our country's history. We feel as some proud father, when he learns that a vile adulterer has robbed him of his honor, by blackening with crime the escutcheon of his family's purity, handed down to him unsullied through a long line of noble ancestors. If the tears of a bereaved nation, if the blood of the wretched murderer, and the fears of his guilty accomplices in treason, could purge from our history this dark sin, it were soon done. But it admits of no atonement, no palliation. It is one of these great crimes, that stop the pleading of mercy, and cry with the voice of martyred blood for vengeance.

"All that have heard of it have said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that our fathers came to this land from among the nations until this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds."

When the children of Israel heard of the crime committed in their midst, they gathered themselves unto the Lord in Mizpeh, and went into His house to inquire concerning the sin, and how they might put away evil from the nation. Surely then, brethren and countrymen, it is but proper conformity to a wise example for us to come into the sanctuary of the Lord, and consider, as in His sight and through the teaching of His word, how we may purge ourselves of the evil that has dishonored our land and thrown reproach upon the name of a christian people. Nay more, for the pulpit to keep silence while the hand of violence was committing crimes in our land whose very recital freezes the blood, would be a sad and criminal dereliction in duty. It would be to prove false to the command of Him who bids us "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," as well as "to God the things that are God's,"

and to proclaim the preaching of the gospel such a sublimated thing, that while ministers talk of heaven and justification by faith, traitors and parricides, calling themselves christians, may practice unrebuked in our midst, such deeds as make humanity blush for shame. But God forbid that I should so learn Christ, or so preach Him among you. The same command that bids every minister go and preach the gospel of God's atoning love, also charges him to "teach men to observe all things whatsoever" Christ has commanded; and who will say, with His word before him, that Christ has not commanded the practice of those moral, social, and political virtues, the want of which even paganism condemned as a sin; or that He permits His people to connive at those crimes which, before His coming, the universal sentiment of mankind judged worthy of death to the perpetrators. It might be said that such deeds as this, when horror is still fresh to us, need no greater denunciation than their announcement, since they damn themselves in their commission. So one unacquainted with the depravity of the times might think; but what must he say when he learns that there are hundreds, even in our own community, who have openly approved the deed, and that thousands of others, while they have barely conscience enough to condemn the murderous act, do yet rejoice in the death of him whose loss we mourn—what can he say other than this: that either those who feel thus are in their measure participants in the crime, and guilty of wickedness that makes them most infamous, or that the victim of the assassin, on account of his crimes and misdeeds, deserved his fate. Such are the alternatives, which the consideration of that deed of violence, enacted in the national capital, presses upon us.

In considering them let me ask, did Abraham Lincoln deserve to die? Was he a tyrant? Pardon me, my mourning countrymen, that I should for a moment apply that title to him who wished to be absolute in nothing, save in the power to forgive.

Often it has happened that men usurping the power to rule, have been made the victims of their own ambition. But not so in this case. The victim of the murderer was our lawful Chief Magistrate, called to his high office by the voice of the people, in accordance with the law of the land. Were, then, his moral and

mental qualities such as to unfit him for his trust, and give the good a reason to rejoice in his removal? To day, when sorrowing millions are deploring his loss, when a stricken nation is enshrining his memory and hastens to give him the adoration due to heroes and the saviours of their country, and when history has already added his name to the roll of the noble army of martyrs—who has the temerity to become his detractor? He was not one of those characters, whom revolutions make notorious by casting them up to the surface, and whose greatness is more fortuitous than merited.—God, who is never at a loss for instruments to do His will, and who ever works in such a way as to set at naught the pride of man, had given him such training and gifts as qualified him, in a peculiar manner, for his great mission in this transitional era of our history. Drawn out from the midst of the people, he was prepared by a fellowship in their trials and toils to sympathize with them in their bloody, and, it is to be hoped, last struggle in this land, against oppression and aristocratic privilege. As a citizen, the whole course of his private life was marked by such sincerity and fidelity to principle, as to make his name a proverb of honesty. And in his public career the closest scrutiny of his enemies failed to discover one just accusation against his integrity. Here was the secret of his great popularity with the people; and in this lay his first qualification for his difficult position. The emergency of the times demanded that a degree of power should be conferred on him, which had been given to no other President; but men felt safe in committing their most precious earthly inheritance into his pure hands. Suspicion of the Chief Magistrate would have been almost fatal to us in certain periods of the country's struggle; but such was his admitted integrity, that it always disarmed resentment, even when men were dissatisfied with his acts. Plain, simple-hearted, genial, and with a frankness that went straight to the heart, there were few who approached him, though prejudiced against him, but went away filled with admiration for the man, and respect for his sincerity. His conscientiousness gives peculiar lustre to his character, and as carried out in the duties of his high office, makes his name worthy to be written by the side of that of the Father of his Country. He is great, because

he was true, for no matter how extraordinary a life may appear, let us suspect the actor's sincerity, and it loses all merit in our eyes. We have, to-day, reason to thank God that in these dark times, when the perjury and dishonesty of our public men had weakened confidence in our government, and brought us to the verge of ruin, He placed the helm of public affairs in the hands of an honest and just man.

Among his moral qualities, not the least prominent was his faith in God. Like all true servants of the Most High, he was conscious of the greatness of his responsibility, and his touching request to his friends and neighbors, at the time of his departure for the scene of his future work and martyrdom, shows where he was looking for help. Prayer and meditation of the Divine word were not occasional, but constant duties with him; and it was from his trust in God that he derived his consolation and fortitude in his darkest hours. Well do I remember his appearance, as, with quivering lip and tearful eye, in that very room where his body lay in woeful state, he told a company of clergymen who came to express their prayerful sympathy, how he valued the prayers of christians, and that when everything was dark around him, his only refuge had been the "mercy seat."

Relying implicitly on God's wisdom and goodness, and believing that he was laboring in the holy cause of liberty and just government, "he looked danger in the face with a smile, and endured the incessant toils of his high place, with a serenity that was almost superhuman."

Nor was there wanting in him that quality, which, going hand in hand with justice and truth, makes the ruler godlike—sweet mercy,

"—— mightiest in the mighty; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown."

His generous heart could harbor no resentment, and cherish no sentiments of revenge. It pleased him better to pardon than to punish, and to overcome his and the country's enemies by transforming them into friends. Alas! that so gentle a heart must be driven from earth by the hand of murder. His intellectual qualities, though not of the highest order of genius, were such as, beyond all question, gave him a peculiar capacity for the duties of his

office. Quick in his perceptions, and of a keen logical mind, his good sense, conjoined with his sterling integrity, served him better in extremity than diplomacy. His knowledge of human nature was profound, and it was from men and their actions more than from any theory of law or ethics, that he drew his arguments and illustrations of policy. I do not forget, while commending his virtues, that he had enemies who bitterly denounced him, for his life was no exception to the great law that those who stand for righteousness and truth, must "suffer persecution", and be reviled falsely. Strange would it have been, in a war with Slavery, if the author of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the great representative of Freedom, had been treated otherwise. It has been charged against him, as the most culpable of his faults, that he was light and frivolous at times. It is not a little remarkable that the same accusation was made against two illustrious characters in history, to whom, in many respects, the late President bore a marked resemblance. It is said of Cromwell, the father of English liberty, that his intercourse with his friends was full of cordiality. He has been reproached with a fondness for buffoonery; "but we must recollect," says his biographer, "that such a characteristic trait is often found in the most christian and truly serious men." The same charge was brought against William, Prince of Orange, whom the Hollanders love to call "the father of his country;" a man whose religious fidelity, pure patriotism, singular magnanimity, and tragic death by the pistol of an assassin in the hour of his country's deliverance, afford the nearest parallel in history, to the character and fate of our lamented Chief Magistrate. And, in answer to the same charge, may we not say of the latter martyr, what the historian has written of the former? "In the darkest hour of his country's trial, he often affected a serenity he was far from feeling, so that his apparent gayety, at momentous epochs, was even censured by dullards, who could not comprehend its philosophy, nor applaud the flippancy of William the silent."

Such are some of the characteristics of the man who, until a few days ago, sat in the seat of Washington, the honored head of a mighty republic. He was not perfect, but great and good in face of his imperfections. Yet, looking at his character in the trans-

forming light of death, which so strangely turns the blemishes into shadows, and thus brings out more perfectly the beauties of the life picture, it is difficult to see what we could alter without also affecting the perfection of his work for this people. Called to preside over the destinies of the nation in the most stormy and eventful period of its life, he stood faithfully and conscientiously at his post, and at last saw his policy not only endorsed by the people in his re-election, but vindicated by success. Like Moses of old, he had led the people through the wilderness of trial, and already saw with glad eyes the green hill tops and smiling valleys of the land of peace and rest. With thoughts of mercy, and intent on peace, he was preparing to lead us to its full fruition, when suddenly, like the breath of frost to the blossoms of spring, there came these tidings to pall our hopes and turn universal joy into mourning—*he is dying*. Did we not all see the dreadful sight,—the bed of death with its stifled grief, the noble form motionless, save that its breast heaved to the laboring breath—grave senators with faces bathed in tears—sobs that come from the adjoining room—the noiseless attendants—the anxious surgeons watching the tremor of the waning pulse? And soon, like a knell heard throughout the wide land, went the message, *he is dead*. Yes, dead! my countrymen. Foully murdered by the hand of treason! “Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail among the children of men.” Oh! day of horror and awful judgment! when, in an instant, the bright sky of our joy is hung with clouds of woe. From border to border and sea to sea, the land mourns. It is as if a corpse lay in every homestead. Business is suspended. Grief makes every true heart throb heavily. Men grasp each other by the hand, made brothers in sorrow, and heart speaks its sympathy to heart in expressive silence, or through falling tears. Such was the man, and such his throne in the hearts of the people, whom murder and treason,

“Two yoke devils sworn to either’s purpose,”

singled out among others as the first victim for the assassin’s blow. Good, noble, faithful in the trust committed to his hands, and standing at the hour of his death like a minister of mercy pleading for the pardon of the guilty, did he deserve to die? No, verily!

“ He hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Do plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
 The deep damnation of his taking off.”

Oh! it were easy to give this deed a voice that would arouse a host of good and loyal men, like a trumpet's call to arms, each one burning with righteous indignation to send the guilty murderer and his traitorous participants, unshrived of their damning sin, to the judgment bar of God. It were easy to do this; for such deeds are to the passions of men, like the breath of the tempest to the waves of the sea. They arouse the awful slumbering sense of justice in the heart. They turn the milk of human kindness into gall; and for once forgetting that God is merciful, we rejoice that He is just.

But let us consider this deed calmly, and speak our minds, not under the impulse of vindictive passion, but as Christians and patriots, in view of our duty to God and our country. An event like this, though brought about by the hand of violence, and covering its perpetrators with eternal infamy, did not come by chance. God reigns, and the counsels of the wicked are ever made subservient to His great and glorious designs. He, whose power none can resist, and whose wisdom it is impicity to question, has permitted this calamity to fall upon us. It would be rash to say that we fully understand its teachings, while as yet, the design is only partially unfolded. God's judgments are “a great deep,” and He alone adequately interprets them in the progress of history. But still, though dark, they are always light enough to guide us in present duty. So his word teaches—“Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it.”

First of all and naturally, this dark deed calls our attention to its guilty perpetrators, and the treason which for four years has been deluging the land in blood. As yet, the full extent of the conspiracy has not been divulged. We only know, that among others, there was one, born in sin and trained in the “school of vice,” a depraved actor, a mock king and patriot of the stage, fit representative of the empty, vamping, strutting “chivalry” and spurious patriotism, that gave itself a willing servant to do the dark behests of Slavery—that there was one pre-eminent in guilt.

whose hands are red with the blood of the martyred dead, and whose brow has on it the mark of Cain. He flies; but the earth is not wide enough to hide the wretched fugitive, and mankind will not sleep while he lives. But his punishment will not still the voice of blood that cries from the ground. Let none mistake the bearing of this crime, or attempt to disconnect it from its proper origin. Men are, indeed, depraved; but such crimes and conspiracies as this can no more come forth to blast society, without some antecedent evil sentiment in which they originated, and by which they were fostered, than the pestilential vapors which hang over the valleys, and bring down heaven's fiery bolt upon the pure mountain tops, can rise up without corruption and decay on the plain beneath. It logically belongs to the work of rebellion and treason; and when history makes its dreadful arraignments of those who engaged and sympathized in the attempted destruction of the freest and best government on the face of the earth, last, but not least among their crimes, will be written, as in letters of blood, the assassination of the noble, just, faithful, and merciful President of the Republic. Some may attempt to deny the responsibility; but he who cast the spark into the magazine, and those who encouraged him in the deed, are all, in their measure, responsible for the explosion. It is idle to deny the fact that multitudes of the more ignorant and thoughtless among those who desired the success of rebellion, rejoice in this murder; while the more thoughtful deplored it, because it was rash and untimely. Is it not also a fact, that could this dark deed bring back to life the dying rebellion, the mourning of many would be turned into great joy? Is not this crime, beyond all question, alike in its origin and purpose to the deeds and wishes of armed traitors in our land? That which gives it pre-eminence in enormity above any ordinary murder, is the fact that it was done to the person of the Chief Magistrate as such; and that the hellish plot of which it was a part, embraced the destruction of the chief men of the nation, that the nation itself might be destroyed. It was an attempt at the assassination of the national life. It was mad and foolish; but not more so than the attack on Fort Sumter and not more wicked, so far as the purpose was concerned. If you deem the causeless and

criminal rebellion of the South justifiable, then, while you condemn the murderer, you must justify the death of the President ; for to him, as the representative of the people, you must attribute the great wrong of crushing the power of Slavery. But, in view of his justice, his moderation, his pure patriotism, and the seal of approval which God in His providence has placed upon his efforts to preserve the liberties and unity of our country, who is so lost and blinded by sin as to accept the alternative ?

This, it seems to me, is the first great lesson to be learned from this sad and mysterious event,—a lesson of warning and a call to repentance for those who have been engaged, either by deed or desire, in aiding the work of rebellion. When we wish to teach men the awful nature of sin against the government of God, we lead them to the cross of Christ, that they may see its consequences in His vicarious sufferings ; and in accordance with the same principle, may not the bleeding form of the great martyr for the cause of civil liberty and order, teach thousands who have been led away into mad rebellion, the true nature and results of their crime ? Such, I believe, is its design, and such will be its effect. Men can now judge this great conspiracy against human rights and just government, by its fruits. God has, in the permission of this deed of murder, written the last sentence in His lesson to traitors. He has completed the picture warning them of guilt, and now he holds it before them for the reclaiming of those who can be saved. Behold its horrors ! It is a land of peace and plenty suddenly transformed into a wide battle field. Frauds and robberies begin the change. Senators, with their oaths of allegiance fresh upon their lips, plot treason and excite their blind followers to madness. Assassin-like, when not a shot had been fired, or a deed done to arouse their feelings, they assault the sovereignty of the nation. Suddenly the plagues of war are let loose ; armies march to meet in dreadful conflict, and fields already fertile are glutted with human blood. Fire and sword overturn the monuments of industry, while plunder and rapine impoverish alike the loyal and the false ; cities are ruined, plains desolated, and towns sacked and consigned to the flames. The scene moves on. The martyred dead rise from their nameless graves, and tramp by with the tread of victors, cry-

ing with the voice of the souls under the altar in heaven, *slain by treason!* The prisons are opened and their wan, haggard captives lift up their skeleton hands, and with dying accents, whisper through their shriveled lips, *starved by treason!* A long procession of weeping widows and orphans pass by in habiliments of woe, each separate sob swelling the great accusation that goes up in a cloud of sighs to the throne of a just God, *bereaved by treason!* And last of all there comes a stately form, pale as death. He stands in silence, lest his great loving heart should even now falter in the charge; but his ghastly wound cries with the voice of innocent blood, *murdered by treason!* This is the record of treason and rebellion. It is now complete. The last warning is given, and God's voice, to all who have been led astray by passion and prejudice, so that they have inadvertently become implicated in all this guilt, is, "Come out of this Babylon; purge yourselves of her sins, that ye be not partakers of her plagues." Now the millstone of His wrath is lifted up, and a mighty angel will hurl it to a swifter fall. It is heavy with the wrongs of the innocent, and with the woes of a bleeding land, and when it falls, as fall it will, upon the obstinately guilty, who are defiled with oppression and drunken with the wine of their wickedness, it shall hurl them to the depths of shame and everlasting contempt; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth them, and such shall ever be the reward of those who would betray the interests of humanity and call evil good, in the name of the Lord.

We all, as patriots interested in the future of our country, and as Christians caring for the interests of the church and the welfare of humanity, desire the preservation of the Union. It was for this purpose that we fought the armies of rebellion on so many bloody battle fields, and gave life and treasure without stint. Armed resistance to law, which stood in the way of peace, is now, through the blessing of God, broken and crushed. But after this there is another obstacle to the restoration of harmony which the bayonet cannot remove. It is the bitterness and stubbornness of unsubdued hearts—unsubdued because they are not penitent; and may not this event, so horrible in its nature, be God's providence to remove that obstacle? When those who engaged in rebellion

learn that they have slain their best friend—not that he sympathized with them in their sin, but that he was the noble representative of a paternal government, ever ready to pour blessings, and not curses, upon them—must it not awaken sorrow for their course, and a renunciation of the past? Surely, my friends, a man who will hereafter affiliate with such a cause, born in perjury, stained in its history with deeds of barbarity that seem almost incredible, and blackened in its dying hours by a murder without parallel in enormity, proves himself a traitor at heart, and unworthy of the pity or respect of the good. Would to God, then, that all who have been led away by this great wickedness, would save their own manhood, and their country future woe, by an open confession of their mistake and sin. There is a false consistency about crime, which, in this case, leads many to try to escape from the past, not by a frank acknowledgment of their error, but by becoming “conservative,” as it is called. Conservatism is always good; but not the conservatism born of treason and allied to it. It is nobler by far to confess a wrong, than to hide or palliate it. The real humiliation lies in the wrong doing, not in abandoning it. Let, then, those who have been led astray into this gigantic wrong, purge themselves of it; and if, even at this eleventh hour, those who sneered at us, or oppose us in our efforts to maintain the holy cause of freedom and law, should see their sin and confess it, none should be more ready to applaud their course and receive them with joy, than patriot Christians, over whose conversion from a greater rebellion, the angels in heaven rejoiced. But if there is in this, a lesson of warning and a call for repentance to our rash and misguided countrymen, who have labored so earnestly to effect their own ruin, there is also something for the loyal and true, who have been faithful to their country in the hour of peril. It calls for renewed devotion to that great cause for which Abraham Lincoln died. It bids us spare no effort, and give ourselves no rest, until the fell spirit that slew him is banished from our land back to the depths of its native hell. It calls upon every man to consider how, aside from his ordinary duties as a citizen, he may best complete the regeneration of his country, and secure the permanent triumph of liberty and justice. This last blow of rebellion has

given unmeasured strength to the nation, for no true patriot can look upon the lifeless form of the great martyr for liberty, without feeling his heart beat with a stronger, purer, and more enduring determination to sustain and defend her cause against every foe. True, the living man is gone,—removed when we seemed to need him most; but the power of his life is the rich legacy he has left his country. No! he is not lost to us. “A truly great man, when heaven vouchsafes so rare a gift, is not a temporary flame, burning brightly for a while, and then giving place to returning darkness. It is rather a spark of fervent heat, as well as radiant light, with power to enkindle the common mass of human mind, so that when it goes out in death, no night follows, but it leaves the world all light, all on fire, from the potent contact of its own spirit.” The malice of his foes has but placed Abraham Lincoln upon a loftier height of glory, from which no change of time can cast him down; and the nation shall ever hear his voice, above the noise of party strife, calling upon it to make common cause against all treason, and to maintain, with christian charity and fidelity, the rights and liberties of all.

May not this sad event, also, teach us a lesson concerning a duty which has been sadly overlooked by many professing Christians? It is to give proper honor to the persons of our rulers. It is a scriptural injunction; but many read it as if it had no application to our form of government, and act as if republican liberty gave them the right to heap every dishonoring epithet on those in authority. We have regarded our rulers, not as ministers of law appointed by God, but as the representatives of parties; and need we wonder, that under such training, treason found many educated to its fearful service. But is it not remarkable, and a proof that God has, in a measure, purified us, that he who was called a “sectional” president, should be carried to his grave, mourned for as a father by the whole land? And must not the horror we have felt at the deed of the murderer, in assaulting his person, sacred to us because the symbol of law, restrain us in the future from “speaking evil of dignitaries” for vile and partisan purposes?

Finally, let this national bereavement, like the bereavement that fills a household with mourning when the honored father is removed,

turn the thoughts of the people to Him, who, in His all-wise providence, permitted it. We cannot, indeed, perfectly understand His strange work; but it so much resembles all His mighty deeds among us, during the past four years, that we are ready to receive it in the belief that it will speedily be overruled for our good. The blood of the martyrs of liberty, like that of the martyrs of the gospel, has ever strengthened the cause for which it was shed; and every attempt of man to thwart the purposes of God in history, has but hastened their fulfillment. Let, then, the deliverance of the past, as well as the darkness and sorrow of the present, lead us to a more humble trust in God, and faith in His purposes. Without such a belief underlying all its institutions, no nation can be truly great, or continue free and pure. Godlessness will ruin the liberties of any land. But to know that the Lord is God, to feel our responsibility to Him, to recognize His hand in the march of human affairs,—this is life, life to nations, as well as to individuals. To this end God has been disciplining us, and because of this, we may rejoice with a hope “full of glory.” Ours shall be a land redeemed and disenthralled from every sin—a nation humbled, purified, and knit together by such memories and glorious hopes as belong to no other people—a nation whose God is the Lord. Let us, in the midst of present sorrows, rejoice in the assurance of faith in our destiny; for, even now we stand like Israel at the banks of the Jordan, on the borders of our new inheritance. And when we cross over, when our bleeding feet press the green sod of the land of peace, when, standing in its pure light, we shall turn to review these days of conflict and doubt and pain, then, I doubt not, this dark present will furnish one of the brightest proofs of God’s loving wisdom. Then we shall know that all our way, like the exodus of old, is one abounding in manifestations of the goodness and power of God; that it was the march by which a free people were led up to dominion and prepared to give liberty and law to the whole earth. In this hope we will rejoice; for in that day, my countrymen, whose dawning we may now see, this glorious banner, no longer draped in mourning, but flung to the breeze, and purified from every stain of dishonor, shall be the true emblem of gospel liberty, and the symbol of the freest, strongest, and most Christian nation on the face of the earth.



1875





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 012 045 233 2

